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ADSGC NEWS

Alcohol & Drug Services of Gallatin County Newsletter



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Providing prevention, education, addiction and mental health treatment services to help on your road to a healthy lifestyle.



Paint the State will build on the success of the 2006 & 2010 Paint the State contests, when teens all over Montana created more than 1,000 works of art, making it the largest public art contest in history.

Show us your creativity by painting a mural or filming a video with your powerful anti-Meth message and you could win up to \$10,000 in cash!

For Registration & Contest Details Go to:

[Facebook.com/MontanaMethProject](https://www.facebook.com/MontanaMethProject)

Parentpowermt

the power to prevent underage alcohol use



Parents, we need your help. Studies show that parental disapproval of underage drinking is the number one reason that children choose not to drink alcohol.

Here in Montana, underage drinking is a serious public health concern. Alcohol remains the number one drug of abuse for Montana's youth.

The sobering truth about underage drinking

The brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence [ages 12-21] and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes.

New imaging machines, such as MRIs, PET, and SPECT scans, have given scientists exciting views into the development of the human brain. While we once thought the brain was fully developed at birth, now we know that the brain continues to develop until the mid-twenties.

New scientific research has also shown that alcohol affects a teen's still-developing brain differently than an adult brain and can harm brain development. Alcohol slows down brain activity; and the negative affect of alcohol lasts far longer in a teen brain than in an adult (up to two weeks).

If a teen uses alcohol before his or her brain is fully developed, it can keep the good judgment and impulse-control part of the brain from properly developing or "wiring." It can also damage the memory and learning areas of the brain; and it greatly increases the risk of alcohol addiction.

Underage drinking also increases the risk of mental illness, and contributes to other anti-social behavior. More teens die as a result of alcohol use than all other illegal drugs combined.

Talking with your teen about NOT using alcohol is the first step in prevention. Developing open, trusting communication between you and your child is essential to helping your teen avoid alcohol use. If your teen feels comfortable talking openly with you, you'll have a greater chance of guiding him or her toward healthy decision making.

For more information about [Parentpowermt](http://parentpowermt.org) visit: parentpower.mt.gov



41% of teen marijuana smokers say they began before the age of 15.

Marijuana Talk Kit

What you need to know to talk with your teen about marijuana

Between marijuana legalization, the normalization in pop culture and new ways of using (edibles, vaporizers, concentrates), it's becoming more complicated for parents to talk to their teens.

So where do you start? And what should you say? The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids is here to help.

Inside the Marijuana Talk Kit, you will find:

- Facts about marijuana
- Why weed is still risky for teens
- Ways to talk with your teen about marijuana
- What you should - and shouldn't say - when talking with your teen
- How to respond to your teen's questions and arguments
- Resources to help

The Marijuana Talk Kit will help you have meaningful, productive conversations with your teen.

<http://www.drugfree.org/MJTalkKit/>



Partnership[™] for Drug-Free Kids

Where families find answers

A note to parents if you smoke or drink

If you use marijuana or drink alcohol — whether in front of your teen or not — you should anticipate that he is going to call you out on this (“But you smoke weed/drink alcohol!”)

Take the time to reflect on, and perhaps reevaluate, your own use — especially if your teen is seeing you use. You may want to consider the effect your behavior has on him.

For instance, if you come home from a long, stressful day and the first thing you do is smoke a joint or pour yourself a drink, you may want to try modeling another behavior for your child (like going for a walk, working out, reading, stretching, deep breathing or something else that helps you unwind). Showing your teen that you use a substance to relieve stress or as a coping skill, can send the wrong message.

Ask yourself why you drink and/or smoke, how often, what time of day and how much you use. These answers are going to affect your credibility with your teen, give you some insight into your own behavior and allow you to evaluate whether your substance use is in any way becoming a harmful and unhealthy coping mechanism.

These are questions only you can answer. Think about them in an honest manner, and reach out for help if you need it. (Consider calling the Partnership’s Parents Toll-Free Helpline at **1-855-DRUGFREE.**)

If you don’t feel comfortable talking about your substance use with your teen, you can put the focus back on him. You can say, “I’m glad you brought this topic up. I think it’s important that we talk about my use as well as yours and, I would like it if we started with your use, why do you feel the need to drink or smoke?”

Try asking your teen, “How does my use affect you? I’m curious, because who you are and how you are feeling is important to me.” This invites him to share and ask questions and promotes collaboration.

Consider also asking your teen, “How does knowing that I use pot or drink alcohol make you think differently about your own decisions?” Open-ended questions like these show curiosity, respect and understanding.

And lastly, be sure to express your love and caring about your child’s health, development and well-being.

—Heather Senior, LCSW, Parent Support Network Manager Partnership for Drug-Free Kids